

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

**Claim 1 (currently amended)** A connection data change device, comprising:

a connection data management part configured to manage ~~managing~~ connection data for ~~connection~~ connecting an associated switching unit with an external ~~another~~ switching unit; and

a change operation part configured to change ~~changing~~ the connection data so that the connection with the external ~~other~~ switching unit is changed to a fixed connection type or a variable connection type,

wherein said change operation part changes the connection to the external ~~other~~ switching unit from ~~to~~ the variable connection type ~~when the connection is made, and to~~ the fixed connection type upon receiving a request to change the connection to the external switching unit ~~after the connection is completed.~~

**Claim 2 (currently amended)** The connection data change device as claimed in claim 1, wherein said change operation part changes the connection with the external ~~other~~ switching unit to the fixed or variable connection type in accordance with a command input from an outside.

**Claim 3 (currently amended)** The connection data change device as claimed in claim 1, comprising:

a ~~first~~ detection part configured to detect ~~detecting~~ the external ~~other~~ connected switching unit;

a ~~first~~ message compilation part configured to generate ~~generating~~ a message controlling a ~~said~~ change operation part of the external ~~other~~ detected switching unit; and

a ~~first~~ transmission part configured to transmit ~~transmitting~~ the message to the external ~~other~~ detected switching unit.

**Claim 4 (currently amended)** The connection data change device as claimed in claim 3, further comprising ~~an a~~ first analysis part configured to receive an incoming ~~receiving the~~ message from the external switching unit and to analyze ~~analyzing~~ contents thereof, the incoming message controlling the change operation part of the switching unit.

**Claim 5 (currently amended)** The connection data change device as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a release part configured to change ~~changing~~ the connection with the external ~~other~~ switching unit from the fixed connection type to the variable connection type and to release ~~releasing~~ the connection with the external ~~other~~ switching unit.

**Claim 6 (currently amended)** The connection data change device as claimed in claim 5, further comprising:

a ~~second~~ detection part configured to detect ~~detecting~~ the external ~~other~~ connected switching unit;

a ~~second~~ message compilation part configured to generate ~~generating~~ a message controlling a ~~said~~ release part of the ~~other~~ detected external switching unit;

a ~~second~~ transmission part configured to transmit ~~transmitting~~ the message to the other detected switching unit; and

a ~~second~~ an analysis part configured to receive an incoming ~~receiving~~ the message from the external ~~ether~~ switching unit and to analyze ~~analyzing~~ contents of the incoming message, the incoming message controlling the release part of the connection data change device.

**Claim 7 (currently amended)** The connection data change device as claimed in claim 5, further comprising a release reason storage part configured to store ~~storing~~ a valid release reason for releasing the connection with the external ~~ether~~ switching unit.

**Claim 8 (currently amended)** A connection data change method, comprising the steps of:

extracting connection data for connection of an associated switching unit with an external ~~another~~ switching unit; and

changing the extracted connection data so that the connection with the external ~~ether~~ switching unit is changed to a fixed connection type or a variable connection type,

wherein the connection to the external ~~ether~~ switching unit is changed from ~~to~~ the variable connection type ~~when the connection is made, and~~ to the fixed connection type ~~after the connection is completed~~ upon receiving a request to change the connection to the external switching unit.

**Claim 9 (currently amended)** A switching unit, comprising:

a connection data management part configured to manage ~~managing~~ connection data for connection with an external ~~another~~ switching unit; and

a change operation part configured to change ~~changing~~ the connection data so that the connection with the external ~~ether~~ switching unit is changed to a fixed connection type or a variable connection type,

wherein said change operation part changes the connection to the external ~~ether~~ switching unit from ~~to~~ the variable connection type ~~when the connection is made, and~~ to the fixed connection type ~~after the connection is completed~~ upon receiving a request to change the connection to the external switching unit.

**Claim 10 (currently amended)** The switching unit as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

a first detection part configured to detect ~~detecting~~ the external ~~ether~~ connected switching unit;

a first message compilation part configured to generate ~~generating~~ a message controlling said a change operation part of the ~~ether~~ detected external switching unit;

a first transmission part configured to transmit ~~transmitting~~ the message to the ~~ether~~ detected external switching unit; and

~~a first~~ an analysis part configured to receive an incoming ~~receiving~~ the message and to analyze ~~analyzing~~ contents thereof, the incoming message controlling the change operation part of the switching unit.

**Claim 11 (currently amended)** The switching unit as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

a release part configured to change ~~changing~~ the connection with the external ~~other~~ switching unit from the fixed connection type to the variable connection type and to release ~~releasing~~ the connection with the external ~~other~~ switching unit; and

a release reason storage part configured to store ~~storing~~ a valid release reason for releasing the connection with the external ~~other~~ switching unit.